

Retailer Introduces Energy Star Manufactured Homes to Consumers

By Linda Cawley, IDWR Information Specialist

Ron Balderson believes that if his product is good enough for his customers, it's good enough for him.

Balderson is the owner of Home Showcase North – a company that sells manufactured homes in Cascade and surrounding Valley County. This summer Balderson learned about the new electrically heated Energy Star[®] manufactured home program. He was so impressed with the new upgraded energy conservation features that he ordered one of the homes to serve as his office in Cascade.

Home Showcase North has been selling Super Good Cents[®] manufactured homes for more than a year, but with the new electric option Energy Star homes, Balderson knows he can give his customers an even better product. Each electrically heated home is built according to prescribed energy efficiency specifications under the Northwest Energy Efficient Manufactured (NEEM[™]) home program.

Other energy features include ceiling insulation between R38 and R49, depending on the type of ceiling, R21 insulation in the walls, R33 insulation in the floors, Low-E/vinyl windows, a 25-watt whole house ventilation fan, an energy-efficient water heater, an Energy Star programmable thermostat, and an Energy Star dishwasher.

Energy Star advantage

Kit Homebuilders West of Caldwell constructed Balderson's home/office according to Energy Star standards, a step up from manufactured homes that have been built to Super Good Cents and Natural Choice (gas heated) standards during the past 20-plus years.

Kit is one of five plants in Idaho that builds energy-efficient manufactured homes, and the first plant in the state to offer the new electric Energy Star certified homes.

"This is a big jump forward for Kit as well as Idaho's manufactured home industry," says Bob Minter, senior energy specialist with the Idaho Energy Division.

The Idaho Energy Division works in cooperation with Montana, Oregon, and Washington state energy offices to promote energy-efficient manufactured homes through the NEEM program.

The energy offices provide training, technical assistance, home certification, third party home inspection, and database management for regional utilities and 20 participating manufacturers, including Idaho's five manufacturing plants.

"The program ensures that manufactured homes meet the regional NEEM energy efficiency standards, the region's utilities reap the conservation benefits, and the homeowners realize reduced utility costs and improved home comfort," says Minter.

Buying a manufactured home

"Purchasing a new home is one of the biggest decisions homeowners ever make," says Minter. "Choosing a home built to Super Good Cents/Energy Star specifications help to ensure that people are getting the most energy-efficient home on the market today. No other manufactured home can provide the comfort and savings that people will find in a certified Super Good Cents/Energy Star home."

A *certified* manufactured home is inspected by state energy experts to ensure that it's built according to NEEM specifications for consistent energy-efficient quality. Each home is inspected in the plant. Random field performance checks are also conducted.

As part of the program, participating utility companies provide financial incentives to buyers, ranging from \$300 to \$1,000, and to many of the retailers. Twelve Idaho electric utility companies support and participate in the program.

"We are excited that Idaho manufacturers have embraced these new Energy Star standards," says Anne Alenskis, spokesperson with Idaho Power Company, one of the participating utility companies. "We also are pleased that our customers can ask for Energy Star in both manufactured and site-built housing."

To learn more about Super Good Cents/Energy Star manufactured homes, call the Idaho Energy Hotline, 1-800-334-SAVE or see the Energy Division's website at www.idwr.idaho.gov/energy.